

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 01738 270427Z

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TAGS: EAID, MV

SUBJ: USG ROLE IN HANDLING AUB SCHOLARSHIPS

REF: BEIRUT A-94, MAY 20, 1974

1. WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE AMBASSADOR GODLEY'S PROVIDING US OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON AAO BEIRUT ROLE IN ADMINISTERING AID SCHOLARSHIPS TO AUB. WE FIND PROSPECT OF AUB'S ADMINISTERING THESE SCHOLARSHIPS UNSATISFACTORY AND BELIEVE IT MIGHT LEAD TO TERMINATION OF PROGRAM IN MALDIVES.

2. AUB SCHOLARSHIP PRORAM FOR MALDIVIAN STUDENTS HAS BEEN ONE OF FEW WAYS USG HAS BEEN ABLE DIRECTLY DEMONSTRATE ITS INTEREST IN REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES. SHOULD AUB ADMINISTER THESE GRANTS, FACT OF U.S. PROVISION RESOURCES TO MAKE GRANTS POSSIBLE WILL BE LOST TO GOM, WHICH IN TURN WILL MEAN LOSS OF FOREIGN POLICY PURPOSE FOR WHICH WE ARE PROVIDING THEM.

3. COUNSELING IS ANOTHER SEVERE PROBLEM. MALDIVIAN STUDENTS ARE ONLY ABLE TO STUDY UP TO GCE "O" LEVEL (10TH GRADE) IN MALDIVES. THEY REQUIRE SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO BRING SUTDENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL UP TO UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE STANDARDS. WE NOTE AMBASSADOR GODLEY'S COMMENTS ON PRESENT INADEQUACY OF AUB'S COUNCELING SERVICES. ALTHOUGH THESE PRESUMABLY CAN

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 01738 270427Z

EVENTUALLY BE IMPROVED TO ATTAIN SUITABLE PROFICIENCY,

WE CAN FORESEE CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS IF PROGRAM IS
TURNED OVER TO AUB BEFORE TOP-NOTCH COUNSELING SERVICES
ARE AVAILABLE.

4. WE BELIEVE COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS AUB WOULD FACE
IN DEALING DIRECTLY WITH MALDIVIAN GOVERNMENT MAY BE
INSUPERABLE. BECAUSE OF MALDIVES' ISOLATION AND UN-
RELIABILITY OF COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT
SERVICES, ALMOST EVERY TRANSACTION WITH GOM REGARDING
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HAS REQUIRED MAJOR EMBASSY EFFORT,
INCLUDING SPECIAL TRIPS BY EMBASSY OFFICER TO MALE
TO ADMINISTER TESTS, COLLECT APPLICATION FORMS, ETC.
WE DO NOT THINK AUB COULD ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN DIRECT
LIAISON WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IN MALDIVES FROM
BEIRUT, AND PROGRAM WOULD THUS ULTIMATELY BREAK DOWN
MERELY FROM INABILITY TO COMMUNICATE. ALSO, FOR PAST
YEAR GOM HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE HESITATION IN CONTINUING
AUB PROGRAM, REPORTEDLY OWING TO ANXIETY OVER INTERNAL
POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON AND MIDDLE EAST AREA.
WE BELIEVE THESE FEARS HAVE BEEN ALLAYED BY USG ROLE
IN MALDIVIAN PROGRAM, EMBASSY'S ABILITY REASSURE GOM,
AND, HOPEFULLY, BY GREATER STABILITY ON AUB CAMPUS.
IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT GOM WOULD DROP PROGRAM IF USG'S
ROLE IS NO LONGER EVIDENT.

5. TO CONCLUDE, FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW SAVINGS IN
COSTS THROUGH CLOSING AAO OFFICE DO NOT SEEM WORTH
RISK OF LOSS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ADVANTAGE OR
POSSIBLY TERMINATION OF MALDIVIAN PROGRAM.
VAN HOLLEN

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